



# INVASIVE REPTILES

## SELF-GUIDED CITIZEN SCIENCE IN ST. LUCIE COUNTY



### What are invasive species?

An invasive species is a plant or animal that has moved from its place of origin to another area, negatively impacting the native wildlife there, causing damage that is costly to repair and/or posing a threat to human health and safety.

### How do they get here?

There are many ways species enter new areas.

- For biological control: purposely introduced to control other species
- Hitching a ride: unintentionally catching a ride on cars, boats, or planes
- Raised for food: bred for food and escaped
- Plant trade: brought in unintentionally via the tropical plant industry
- Pet trade: exotic reptiles kept as pets are let loose or escape



### How do invasive species impact ecosystems?

Invasive species are known to have many negative impacts, including:

- Out-competing native wildlife species and preying on native flora & fauna
- Consuming valuable landscape plants, shrubs, trees and flowers, as well as fruits including berries, figs, mangoes, tomatoes, bananas, etc.
- Burrowing under sidewalks, seawalls, and foundations. Iguana burrows near seawalls causing erosion and the eventual collapse of seawalls.
- Leaving droppings in their basking areas. Not only unsightly, but can cause odors and create a possible source of salmonella.

### Is climate change helping them spread?

Florida has the highest number of invasive species of any state in the US, with over 400 documented non-native animal species. Many of these are native to tropical areas and constrained to their natural range by temperature. However, as average temperatures rise in Florida, the number of below-freezing nights is reduced. These new species may establish populations in areas that were once too cold for year-round survival and migrate northward.

The Oxbow Eco Center, 5400 NE St. James Dr.

Port St. Lucie, FL | 772 785 5833

[www.OxbowEco.com](http://www.OxbowEco.com) | [Oxbow@stlucieco.org](mailto:Oxbow@stlucieco.org)



**STEP #1**

# Learn to ID St. Lucie's Most Invasive Reptiles

## LIZARDS



### GREEN IGUANA

- May grow to over 4 feet
- Native to Central and South Americas
- Bask along canals, in trees, patios, decks, sidewalks and lawns
- Adult males may have an orange hue, while females and juveniles are green
- Feed on vegetation, small animals & eggs



### CUBAN BROWN ANOLE

- Normally grow 5-8 inches
- Native to Cuba
- Mostly terrestrial, frequently seen on the ground or in trees and bushes
- Known to out-compete native anoles
- Eats insects, and native anole eggs



### CURLY TAILED LIZARD

- Can grow up to 11 inches
- Native to the Bahamas
- Mostly terrestrial, seen on sidewalks, rocks or rubble and around buildings
- Out-compete Florida native green anoles
- Preys upon insects and spiders



### RAINBOW AGAMA

- May reach 12 inches
- Native to Africa
- Often seen in urban areas on rocks, walls, sidewalks, and trees
- Out-compete native green anoles
- Eats insects, flowers and vegetation
- Males are colorful; females shaded brown



### BROWN BASILISK

- Can grow up to 2 feet
- Native to C. America
- Terrestrial, found in open areas & along canals
- Runs on water's surface and known as the 'Jesus Christ Lizard'
- Eats insects small animals



### VEILED CHAMELEON

- Can grow up to 2 feet
- Native to Yemen
- Arboreal, mostly found climbing in trees
- Competes with native lizards for insects and may even eat small lizards





# Learn to ID St. Lucie's Most Invasive Reptiles



## LIZARDS



### CUBAN NIGHT ANOLE

- Can grow to 18 inches
- Native to Cuba
- Arboreal, often seen on trees in suburban areas
- Preys on smaller anoles, frogs, and eggs.
- Out-competes Florida native anoles



### BLACK & WHITE ARGENTINE TEGU

- May reach up to 4 feet
- Native to South America
- Terrestrial, found in savannas, forest clearings, and roadsides
- Omnivores that eat fruit, eggs, small animals and pet food, when left out



### NILE MONITOR

- May reach 5 feet
- Native to Africa
- Semi-aquatic, often seen in and along canals
- Preys upon birds, mammals, fish, eggs, amphibians, other reptiles, and carrion

## SNAKES



### BURMESE PYTHON

- Rare in St. Lucie County, but prolific in other areas of Florida
- Can reach lengths of up to 26 feet
- Native to Burma
- Semi-aquatic, found in or around water.
- Non-venomous constrictor, preys on native mammals, birds and reptiles
- Contributes to a significant decrease of mammal populations in the Everglades
- Identified by giraffe-like pattern of dark spots on tan background, dark wedges on top of head, and behind the eyes

## TURTLES



### RED-EARED SLIDER

- Can grow up to 12 inches
- Native to Mississippi River basin
- Aquatic turtle, found in ponds, lakes, rivers
- Often seen basking on branches or rocks
- Out-competes native redbelly turtles, preys upon fish

For more info on invasive species in Florida, visit:  
<https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/nonnatives/>

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STEP #2

# REPORT INVASIVE REPTILES

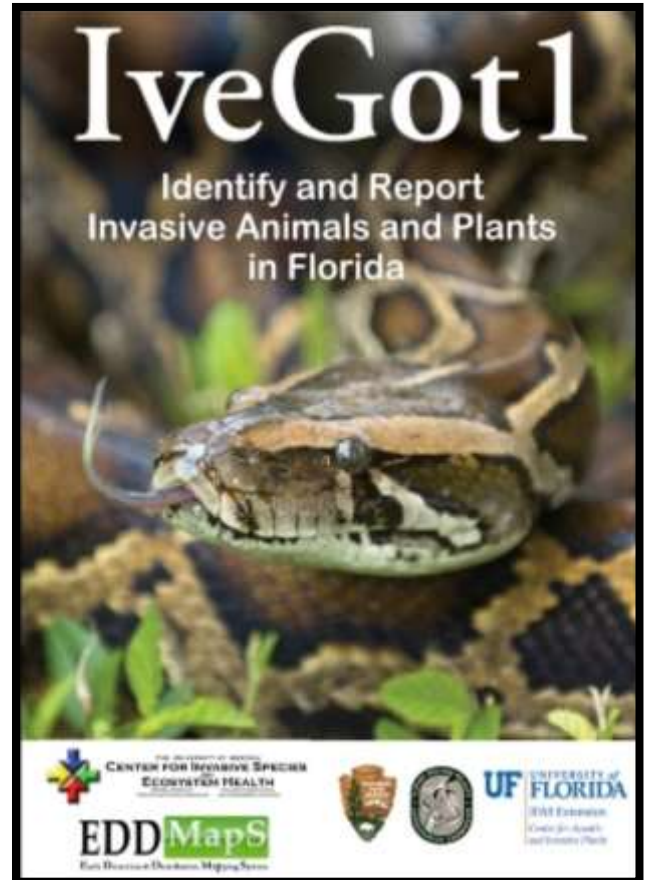


## I've Got 1 App

- Managed by Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission; uses citizen data to help report sightings of invasive species
- Reports are uploaded to EDDMapS and sent to local and state officials for review
- FWC is alerted and depends on reports for early detection & removal efforts

## Download I've Got 1

1. Search "I'veGot1" in the app store
2. Download the App
3. Report Sightings



## Report Invasive Species on Your PC

- Get the 'I've Got 1' App for PC
- Upload, download and view data on your computer by visiting EDDMapS.com
- View distribution maps & species profiles

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